

Bells throughout Delaware to ring as part of “Bells Across the Land: A Nation Remembers Appomattox” on April 9, 2015

-Descendants of Appomattox veterans to serve as bell ringers in New Castle-

(New Castle, Del.—April 2, 2015)—On Thursday, April 9, 2015 beginning at 3:15 p.m., bells throughout Delaware will ring for four minutes (each minute symbolic of a year of war) in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the surrender of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and the United States Army. The surrender, which took place at Appomattox Court House in Virginia on April 9, 1965, is seen as the symbolic end to the American Civil War.



Cupola of the New Castle

Court House Museum. The site's bell will ring at 3:15 p.m. on April 9, 2015 in commemoration of Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox in 1865.

The following Delaware organizations will be ringing their bells as part of the event: Dover Presbyterian and Wesley United Methodist churches, John Bell House (hand bell), Kent County Courthouse, Legislative Mall's Liberty Bell and The Old State House in Dover; Bethel Methodist, Lewes Presbyterian and St. Peter's Episcopal churches and the Lewes Historical Society (school bell) in Lewes; Immanuel Episcopal and New Castle United Methodist churches and the New Castle Court House Museum in New Castle; Old Swedes Church in Wilmington; and the Wyoming United Methodist Church in Wyoming. Other sites are invited to participate.

In New Castle, participants will include two descendants of Appomattox veterans: Kim Burgmuller will ring the bell of the New Castle United Methodist Church and Russ Smith will ring the bell of the New Castle Court House Museum. [Ed. note: Burgmuller and Smith are available for press interviews regarding the Civil War stories of their ancestors.]

Burgmuller's great-great-grandfather, Sgt. Robert Howard who was 16 years old in 1865, served in Company A of the 2nd Regiment, North Carolina Junior Reserves, Army of Northern Virginia. Howard walked home from Appomattox to Fayetteville, N.C. after Lee's surrender. Smith's great-great-grandfather, Pvt. Joseph Jackson, a blacksmith from Brandywine Village (now part of Wilmington, Del.), served in Company B of the 8th Delaware Regiment, Army of the Potomac. Jackson's regiment took part in engagements in pursuit of Lee's army from Petersburg to Appomattox in the spring of 1865.

For the past four years, the National Park Service and many

others have been commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and the continuing efforts for human rights today. Delaware is one of several states across the nation that are participating in “Bells Across the Land: A Nation Remembers Appomattox” in conjunction with a major event to be held on April 9, 2015 at [Appomattox Court House National Historical Park](#). Bells will ring first at Appomattox at 3 p.m. to coincide with the moment the historic meeting between Grant and Lee ended. After the ringing at Appomattox, bells will reverberate across the country. The [First State National Historical Park](#), in collaboration with the [Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), [First State Heritage Park](#), [Lewes Historical Society](#) and the [Old Swedes Foundation](#), orchestrated the bell-ringing ceremony at sites across Delaware.

Additional information about the program is available from the following contacts: Jim Yurasek of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs at 302-736-7413 or jim.yurasek@delaware.gov; Sarah Zimmerman of the First State Heritage Park at 302-739-9194 or Sarah.Zimmerman@delaware.gov; or Jenny Manning of the Lewes Historical Society at 302-645-7670 or jenny@historiclewes.org.

Curriculum materials regarding the Civil War and the surrender at Appomattox are available for schools by contacting Ethan McKinley of the First State National Historical Park at 302-544-6363 or Ethan_McKinley@nps.gov.

Participants are also invited to help write the history of this event by tweeting their observations at **#BellsAcrossTheLand2015**. Stories will be compiled in one place to see how each one helps build this national story.

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